

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 27, with the following amended paragraph:

The OSP host complex 480 also includes a proxy server 4806 for directing data requests and/or otherwise facilitating communication between the client system 405 and the Internet 465. The proxy server [[4802]] 4806 may include an IP ("Internet Protocol") tunnel for converting data from OSP protocol into standard Internet protocol and transmitting the data to the Internet 465. The IP tunnel also converts data received from the Internet in the standard Internet protocol back into the OSP protocol and sends the converted data to the routing processor 4802 for delivery back to the client system 405.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 16, line 18, with the following amended paragraphs:

As shown in Fig. 6, the OSP host complex 680 of the host device 635 includes a control server 6802 in communication with pods [[6810a]] 6804a, 6804b, 6804c, and [[6810b]] 6810. The control server 6802 is configured to transmit and receive data from the pods [[6810a]] 6804a, 6804b, 6804c, and [[6810b]] 6810 in response to certain conditions and/or commands.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 16, line 22, with the following amended paragraphs:

Each of pod [[6810a]] 6804a, 6804b, 6804c, and [[6810b]] 6810 includes one or more interrelated servers capable of operating together to provide one or more services offered by the OSP host complex 680 in a geographically localized manner. In this implementation, pod [[6810a]] 6804a includes a routing processor [[6812a]] configured to directly or indirectly route data packets to a specified destination within or outside of the OSP host complex 680. Similarly, pod [[6810b]] 6804b, 6804c, and 6810 includes a routing processor [[6812b]] configured to directly or indirectly route data packets to a specified destination within or outside of the OSP host complex 680.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 16, line 29, with the following amended paragraphs:

The ~~pod 6810a includes pods 6804a and 6804b~~ include local servers ~~6814a, 6815a, and 6816a, and the pod 6810b includes local servers 6814b, 6815b, and 6816b.~~ The local servers, alone or collectively, are configured to provide services in a geographically localized manner to users associated with the particular pod. ~~As shown, the~~ The OSP host complex 680 also includes non-podded servers ~~6806a and 6806b.~~ In the event that the data requests from a routing processor cannot be satisfied locally by the pod, the routing processor directs the data request to these non-podded servers.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 17, line 5, with the following amended paragraphs:

In one implementation, the local servers ~~6814a, 6815a, and 6816a~~ in pod [[6810a]] 6804a are configured to function equivalently to the local servers ~~6814b, 6815b, and 6816b~~ in pod [[6810b]] 6804b. In such an implementation, the non-podded server 6802 communicates with the pod [[6810a]] 6804a and the pod [[6810b]] 6804b in basically the same manner. In another implementation, however, the local servers ~~6814a, 6815a, and 6816a~~ in pod [[6810a]] 6804a are configured to function differently than local servers ~~6814b, 6815b, and 6816b~~ in pod [[6810b]] 6804b. In such an implementation, the non-podded server 6802 interacts with the pod [[6810a]] 6804a and the pod [[6810b]] 6804b in different ways. In an implementation where the non-podded server 6802 is functioning differently with respect to pods [[6810a]] 6804a and [[6810b]] 6804b, certain computing elements of the non-podded server 6802 are configured to be multi-functional. Alternatively, different computing elements of the non-podded server 6802 may be configured to perform distinct functions. A more complete understanding will be garnered from the communications methods described below.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 17, line 21, with the following amended paragraph:

Examples of each element of Fig. 7 are broadly described above with respect to Figs. 1-6. In particular, client 702 typically has attributes comparable to those described with respect to

client devices 120, 220, 320, 420, 520, [[620,]] and 620 and/or client controllers 125, 225, 325, 425, 525, [[625,]] and 625. The host 704 typically has attributes comparable to those described above with respect to host devices 135, 235, 335, 435, 535, [[635,]] and 635 and/or host controllers 140, 240, 340, 440, 540, [[640,]] and 640. The client 702 and the host 704 may be directly or indirectly interconnected through a known or described delivery network.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 18, line 4, with the following amended paragraph:

The host 704 designates targeting rules applicable to online users of the communications system (step 710). In one implementation, targeting rules include parameters specifying locations of online users. The location of an online user may be a geographic location and/or an online location. The targeting rules also may include specified parameters. The parameters may specify a particular type of access device and/or software employed by [[an]] online users. The host 704 may designate targeting rules before, during, or after ~~during~~ communication with the client 702.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 19, line 3, with the following amended paragraphs:

Examples of each element of Fig. 8 are broadly described above with respect to Figs. 1-6. In particular, client 802 typically has attributes comparable to those described with respect to client devices 120, 220, 320, 420, 520, and 620, and/or client controllers 125, 225, 325, 425, 525, [[625,]] and 625. The host 804 typically has attributes comparable to those described above with respect to host devices 135, 235, 335, 435, 535, and 635 and/or host controllers 140, 240, 340, 440, 540, and 640. The client 802 and the host 804 may be directly or indirectly interconnected through a known or described delivery network.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 19, line 10, with the following amended paragraphs:

As shown in Fig. 8, the host 804 includes a targeting server 8042, an instant voting server 8044a, and a routing processor 8046. In one implementation, and with reference to Fig. 6, the

targeting server 8042 is a non-podded server 6802, the instant voting server 8044a is a podded server ~~[[6815a]]~~, and the routing processor 8046 is a podded routing processor ~~[[6812a]]~~.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 19, line 15, with the following amended paragraphs:

In this implementation, the targeting server 8042 designates polling rules (step 805). The targeting server 8042 may perform such designation in response to user input and/or commands from another server in the pod ~~[[6810a]]~~ 6810 or the OSP host complex 680. The polling rules may include, but are not limited to, the polling issue or question, the target audience or group, and the time limit for answering.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 19, line 20, with the following amended paragraphs:

The targeting server 8042 then sends one or more commands that reflect the designated polling rules to one or more instant voting servers 8044a (step 806). ~~With reference to Fig. 6, each Each instant voting server may be a podded server ~~6815a, 6815b~~ associated with a ~~respective~~ pod. It is understood, however, that each instant voting server may represent a network of interconnected instant voting servers associated with a pod.~~

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 21, line 13, with the following amended paragraph:

The targeting server 8042 designates targeting rules (step 902). The targeting server 8042 then sends commands reflecting the ~~target~~ targeting rules to the instant notification server 8044b (step 904).